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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

**INFORMATION REPORT**

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COUNTRY

Hungary

SUBJECT

Scythe Factory at Szentgotthard

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. In the fall of 1949 apprentices in the scythe factory at Szentgotthard received a monthly wage of 130 forints to be increased yearly by 20 forints, one pair of overalls per year, and free lunch at the factory mess. They also were issued black Soviet-type uniforms which had to be worn constantly.
2. In the first year of their apprenticeship they had to go by train three times weekly to Szombathely, to attend apprentice courses. The apprentices were collected for these courses at Szombathely in order to keep them under better control and supervision during the courses. There were enough apprentices at Szentgotthard for a whole individual course to be set up there too, but decentralization of apprentice schools is avoided. The apprentice school at Szombathely primarily stresses the political indoctrination of the students. The main aim is to convince them that they are indebted to the Soviet Union for everything they have, and they must show their gratitude by producing more and more. Another important subject is: "the tasks of a self-confident and self-conscious worker". There were about 60 to 65 apprentices who came from Szentgotthard to attend the school at Szombathely.
3. The products of the factory were scythes, sickles, agricultural tools, shovels and hoes. Until the end of January 1953 the enterprise had been a Hungaro-Russian Company Ltd. By the beginning of the year the Soviets returned the plant to the Hungarians, and the Soviet manager and technical experts were recalled from the factory. The Soviets no longer needed the products, and the plant worked with a deficit. Till the beginning of 1953 the plant employed about 600 men. When orders declined, production was reduced. The peasants no longer buy tools, and the State farms and cooperatives mainly use machines. Foreign orders, too, have dropped greatly this year. Sometimes Rumania or Czechoslovakia place an order for 10 thousand of the famous scythes, and these orders are shipped within a week or so.
4. By December 1952 and January 1953, 200 factory hands were "transferred" against their will to Ajka and Dunapentele. The transfer was generally only "advised", but there was no other work to be had in the vicinity. If anyone dismissed did not work for one to two weeks, the police picked him up for "loafing" and transferred him forcibly to places where nobody desired to go. Thus it was wiser to obey the "advice" and accept the assigned new job.
5. By April 1953 orders dropped to such an extent that 100 more men were dismissed. They were commandeered by 25 Apr 53 to the machine factory of Mosonmagyaróvár. Those who refused to go were called for an interview, and persuaded to accept the job as appropriate for "self-confident young workmen," and besides the orders of the state have to be

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- 2 -

obeyed. They were told that when more orders came in, they would be allowed to return.

6. The lunch at the mess costs 3.50 forints but is without any food value and very small, and at least six to eight forints worth of other food has to be bought by everyone daily. He never had any money left for recreation or to buy clothes, and could not nourish himself adequately either.
7. No factory hand is able to achieve as much as 80% of the norm without some cheating. The Hungarian steel, being manufactured by norm also, is of very inferior quality and breaks not only when cold but also when hot and being drawn. The plant uses Hungarian and Austrian steel mixed. An average wage earner earns 600 forints per month and after all deductions receives only about 450 forints. There were a great number of female workers employed by the factory, who earned an average of 400 forints per month.

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